

# THE “*CONDER*” TOKEN

## COLLECTOR’S JOURNAL

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONDER TOKEN COLLECTOR’S CLUB

Volume XIX Number 2 Winter 2014/15 Consecutive Issue #68



Binns’ tokens - Dublin 347 to 350

William Binns – Life after token issuing

The End of Spence

First hand report of Token activities in England – Fall 2014

A review of a new Conder book

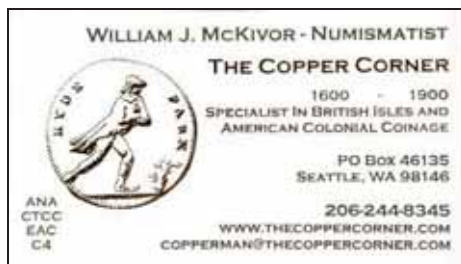
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## New Members

589	Mr. Alan Gingles	Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England
590	Mr. James Almond	Overton, TX
591	Mr. Peter Gargett	Leeds, England

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE WINTER 2014

Dear Fellow Conder Token Lovers---

As I write this, we are heading for the Christmas and New Year holiday season, so my first order of things is to wish all of you a super Holiday all the way around. We do have a lot of things to consider, but one looms over all.

Our membership has not gained at all over the last year or two, and though we do get some new members, we are losing an equal number of the old ones due to age. It is getting to be very difficult to get even three Journals done, in fact for 2014, we now have only two.

It is not lack of funds, we settled that last time. We can get three done for the funds we collect. Our problem is simple---we are not getting enough articles on 18<sup>th</sup> Century tokens to put into the Journal.

Our editor, Jon Lusk, was pulling his hair out over this a couple months ago, but I told him what is, is, and that we cannot change that. I told him that when the next issue is ready, to let me know, and if we only had two this year we will go to the membership and ask them just what to do. I truly thought that when we went from four to three, it would be OK, but we still do not

have the articles to produce a good journal. And, I am unwilling to let a skinny little journal pass as one of the three.

In the UK, they send out 8 smaller, not so fancy, mailings to their subscribers per year. It is nearly all member driven, little articles on tokens and research that they are doing or have done, and it all gets put in a nice little package. The members provide most of the content. It is a token journal, but there is very seldom any 18<sup>th</sup> Century token news in it. They concentrate on 17<sup>th</sup> C and all the minors and local tokens, but the 18<sup>th</sup> C is not a priority. They manage to get enough news in to their Journal editor to put out the eight issues a year. We are the 18<sup>th</sup> C keepers of the seal, but have not enough in the way of input to keep it going. We are lucky if we get a single article, some times.

Thus, will ask the members to contact me with any and all of the following:

Ideas on what to do to make this work,-----and would you be willing to do any of it?

Articles for the journal, or a promise to do one soon (We do have a couple of the latter)

Should we change to a smaller format and do, say, four a year again? Or some other idea?

Keep the current size---even out the dues so that we can

GO TO TWO ISSUES A YEAR BUT GIVE EVERYONE COLOR?

This year we have had trouble getting enough for the two we shall have. It is your club, and a club, not a business, everyone is busy, everyone has little time, but we must make time for this or lose it.

Contact me---Bill McKivor (1-206-244-8345) [copperman@thecoppercorner.com](mailto:copperman@thecoppercorner.com) and let me know what you think. The club needs help to survive, in other words, it needs YOU.

Not really doom and gloom, we have the funds, enough at least, but need to get the membership stirred up with some great stories. Everyone ought to have an idea, send it in, and please volunteer to help fill the pages. I will admit to not having been the world's best leader, and when we lost some of the most enthusiastic members, such as Dr. Richard Doty, things have not been the same,

Help us right the ship. It is our club, and up to all of us to care. Talk to me.

All the best,

Bill McKivor CTCC #3.



# A Fall Worth Taking

*By Jeff Rock*

"Autumn in New England" has been a muse for poets, songwriters, musicians, painters and movie directors for the better part of two centuries. But ask any numismatist receiving this Journal, and Autumn in OLDE England will always be a much better choice. True, there may not be the abundance of leaves changing colors and dazzling the eyes, but our eyes are equally happy to be dazzled by the colors that England offers...all the shades of copper, bronze, silver, brass and white metal too!

For autumn in England means only one thing. TOKENS. OK, the throngs of tourists crowding London streets and every historic site within a 100-mile radius would argue the point I'm sure, but anyone who collects British tokens from roughly the 16th century onwards would surely win that argument in these pages.

The Granddaddy of the British token autumn fun is, actually, really just old enough to be a father. For 33 years, in various cities across the island (and an occasional jaunt to a neighboring island), the Brits have put on a Token Congress. To American ears the term might seem strange, especially given our current level of disenchantment with our own national Congress, but there is no other phrase for it, save perhaps Total Immersion Token Weekend. But more on the Congress later.

For many years the London based auction firm Dix Noonan Webb has held a series of auctions in autumn, one of which has often featured tokens. Some wonderful collections have gone under the gavel in the days before the Token Congress, including those of R.C. Bell, David Spence, Robbie Brown, David Griffiths and many others. The double whammy of a major auction plus the Congress has often been enough of a draw to entice American collectors and dealers to make the long flight and brave tiny hotel rooms at super-sized prices, even during times when the exchange rate was less than generous to our wallets.

But 2014 saw not just two major reasons to go, but three, as the venerable firm of Baldwin's announced the first in a series of public auctions offering tokens from their legendary "basement" – something approaching the Holy Grail for token collectors, known to many but seen by few since time immemorial (or at least since World War Two). In addition (though not enough to draw most American collectors just on its own) the CoinEx show is usually held in London the weekend before the auction(s), a stone's throw from both Baldwin's and DNW, meaning that since a lot of people were already there, it was a good way to kick off the week-long numismatic experience. While considered large by British coin show standards, it would be a small American show, with perhaps 40-odd dealers set up. While the range of material offered was good, only a handful of dealers had tokens and medals -- these included Simon Monks and Richard Gladdle (who coordinated this year's Token Congress), John Newman (who will be running next years), Howard and Frances Simmons, and both Baldwin's and Dix Noonan Webb.

The first of the three major token events to occur was the Baldwin's sale, scheduled just a day before the DNW auction and guaranteeing that pockets would be lighter before the Token Congress even started. The sale contained an amazing 965 lots, all 18th century provincial ("Conder") tokens, every lot containing just a single token, every lot photographed in full color and every lot described in detail. This kind of treatment usually happens in sales filled with rare and expensive items, but Baldwin's presented a range of material for just about every pocketbook, with the vast majority selling in the range of a few hundred Pounds, but occasionally under £20 for some lots and into four figures for others; the total hammer price was over a quarter million Pounds -- or roughly enough to buy a very small studio flat in a bad part of London. Frankly, I would much rather have the tokens, but then again I am prejudiced that way. Kudos to Baldwin's for making the commitment to put out a quality auction catalogue -- it will be one that collectors refer back to for generations to come.

The sale itself was catalogued by American dealer Gary Groll, and draws extensively on his experience as a dealer as well as on the incomparable library at Baldwin's. Many of the tokens in the sale could be traced back to one of the major collections that Baldwin's bought intact. The most important was that of Captain Francis Cokayne, who formed what is undoubtedly the finest collection of British tokens EVER, having his pick of every collection, every auction and every dealer's stock for over a half century! While small groups of Cokayne material have come to market over the years, this core group of rarities and choice condition pieces has been all but hidden since 1946. Cokayne kept meticulous notes of where he acquired his pieces, so often these tokens had a pedigree stretching back the better part of a century or more.

The catalogue itself was presented in an unorthodox, but completely logical manner -- one that actually is more intuitive than much of the Dalton & Hamer layout, but which has its own set of limitations. The tokens were presented in alphabetical order by ISSUER. That guarantees that the sale order will be nowhere near D&H order, especially when a larger issuer like Orchard, Prattent or Skidmore has tokens listed in multiple counties (and even countries) within D&H. It makes sense to bring them together in sequence, but also means a lot of page-jumping within the D&H book and/or whatever notes they have organized in D&H sequence. No way of listing them would make everyone perfectly happy, and this new approach will certainly help collectors view the overall series in a different light, even if they choose not to sort their own collections in such a manner. This was especially helpful when looking at the various mules that may be geographically far apart in D&H but were clearly made at the same time, at the same mint and by the same people and should thus be seen as parts of a larger whole.

The sale started at 10:00 a.m., with a short break for lunch and a much shorter break later in the sale to attend to the call of nature after ingesting tea and coffee at said lunch. The sale ended around 7:30p.m., making for a very long work day, but one that was far more play than work for everyone in attendance. The room was split fairly evenly between American and British collectors and dealers, with more bidding online, on the books via fax and mail, and on



the telephone too. While there were occasional heated battles and plenty of comic relief from a bidder who was often on the wrong lot completely, the whole evening had a sense of camaraderie about it that is often missing completely from American auctions. Many people seemed to know where certain tokens would go -- but often not without a fight. In a sale this large there were inevitable bargains, just as there were pieces that realized far more than many would have guessed. The one thing this writer did NOT hear after the sale was any sort of grumbling about prices. The collectors who wanted things gladly paid the price -- they knew that for many of these tokens the chance might not come again for decades, if it even came again in their lifetime.

A word on two factors that are often of critical importance to American collectors -- grade and price. There has long existed a wide gap between British and American grading, even when the same words are used. The grade "Extremely Fine" in the American system means a coin that has a fair amount of wear to the high points on either side, and probably no original luster (which would be gone by the time the piece wore down from the AU grade level). The British grade of "Good Extremely Fine" sounds similar but could mean a piece anywhere from a Choice EF American grade to an Uncirculated piece with substantial amounts of original mint color! The Baldwin's sale -- held in London, by a British firm -- certainly leaned towards the British grading system but also described in detail the strike, luster, wear and problems on every token so that with that description and the excellent photos of every lot, American collectors could be sure of what they were getting in terms of overall grade; none of the tokens had been cleaned or conserved in any way, so many of them may actually improve should collectors choose to do so. Not a single token was in a slab, though some will surely end up in plastic very soon. The Brits, I think rightly, scratch their heads in wonder about the concept of a knowledgeable collector paying a third party who often only has minimal (if any) experience to render a scientific-sounding numerical grade in a series that it was never intended to apply to. But to each their own.

As for price, most collectors know that auction estimates are truly just that: estimates. For material that hasn't appeared in half a century or more, it's often impossible to offer more than an educated guess. While a substantial number of lots were within a couple of bids of their estimated price ranges, some sold for a bit less and quite a few sold for significantly more (the number of lots not sold could be counted on one hand). No cataloguer or auction house can ever predict the interplay of supply and demand in the marketplace, and all it ever takes is two very determined bidders to set a record price. That said, in reviewing the prices realized for the sale this writer feels the prices on the truly rare and special pieces were usually anywhere from "bargain" to "fair," with only a handful that went at levels I would consider overly expensive. The pieces that I did think went much higher than expected were the choice condition but more common varieties -- not surprisingly these often sold to American collectors and will, sadly, be the pieces that will head to the grading services in short order. Then again, in the world of slabs, getting a 200 year old copper issue with original mint color for a few hundred Pounds probably registers as a bargain so, again, to each their own.

The auction catalogue and prices realized are available at Baldwin's website. A review of all the results for rare and special items would double the size of this Journal, but a look at some of the highlights are warranted – with the caveat that these are the pieces that struck me as interesting and is not a list of all most expensive or rarest pieces in the sale.

Full disclosure first: the area that first attracted me to the “Conder” series was the large group of off-metal pieces that were available, and often unwanted by many collectors. While silver strikes were always valuable, old-time collectors often preferred to have copper instead of brass, white metal or lead – despite the fact that in the vast majority of instances, those off-metal strikes were FAR rarer than their copper counterparts; in many instances an off-metal example of a variety known in copper could well be unique, but they would sell for LESS than the more common copper token would bring! Thankfully the situation has changed, but they still tend to bring far less money than one would expect based on their overall rarity. The Baldwin’s sale contained one of the largest groups of off-metal pieces in decades, most from the Cokayne collection, including delicacies like many previous unknown brass and even three silver strikings of Spence tokens, most of which were either unique or known by just a couple examples. The three silver Spence farthings sold for £900-1100 (roughly \$1800-2200 when the 20% buyer’s fee and current exchange rate are factored in – for hammer prices, which will be given here in British Pounds, just double them to get a pretty accurate conversion into the TOTAL cost in US Dollars); these prices were well above estimate, but each piece is probably unique. The brass Spence farthings and halfpence were more reasonable, averaging around £100-250, though a few went higher, especially the ever-popular cat tokens. Of note, each of the off metal strikes offered in this auction ranged from extremely rare to unique – none of the truly common white metal or brass pieces in the Middlesex National series were included in this sale – and the prices realized seemed reasonable overall. The silver strikes have become a lot more expensive in the last few years, but the examples offered in this sale were usually quite choice and seemed to sell at reasonable prices for the most part. While this writer only won a single silver specimen, a fair number of the other off-metal pieces did find their way into my collection.

Another area of special interest to this writer were the overstruck tokens – tokens struck over other tokens for the most part, though there was one struck over a French silver ecu, something unrecorded prior to this specimen being discovered (not surprisingly, this too was a Cokayne piece). These overstruck tokens are for the most part extremely rare (this sale had more individual overstrikes than any other public auction ever), and most sold for over their estimates, sometimes well over – but again, the combination of rarity, quality, mystery and desirability often made those prices still seem quite reasonable. Those showing more of the undertype design usually brought stronger money than those where the undertype had to be determined with just traces of letters visible and/or the edge lettering of the host token. As a buyer of one of them said as the auctioneer’s hammer came down “where am I EVER going to find another?”

The sale also had large runs of the Prattent London and Westminster series and some of the Skidmore series – the Globe, Clerkenwell and Churches and Gates series especially strong.



While this writer is not well-versed in the overall rarity of individual varieties within each of these larger series, it seemed the quality was uniformly high and prices often over estimate, with the pieces noted as being extremely rare usually hammering well above estimate, with strong competition between collectors and dealers for them. The ever-popular Spence series was also strong – both the ones that were done while Spence had control of his dies and those made by Skidmore after the dies were sold. There was an amazing number of these pieces offered (the Spence section alone with a whopping 260 individual lots!), and most of the ones offered ranging from rare to extremely rare (a few perhaps even unique with their edge lettering). Prices for these were often within the estimate ranges to slightly above for the more available pieces, and while a few did sell lower than estimate, far more of the extremely rare varieties sold for double, triple or more. Needless to say, this popular series remains hot.

OK, enough of the general larger groups where prices often ran the gamut. Onto a few specific tokens of interest to collectors of the series.

The absolute highlight of the sale was, undoubtedly the Sawbridgeworth Penny, Lot 83. One of just five specimens confirmed – and long thought to have been destroyed in a WWII blitz attack in London, this was also a Cokayne specimen, and one he took special pride in because he was able to buy it for less than a quarter of what a lesser specimen had brought at auction a half dozen years earlier. Estimated at a strong £8,000-10,000 it didn't quite reach that level, hammering at £6,600 to a buyer who would have definitely pursued it further. While far short of the record price realized by the only nicer one known, the Noble-Bobbe specimen, it was in the range that most people expected it to go. Surprisingly a few major collectors passed on the piece completely, some considering it more of a medal than a token – a difference that strikes me as somewhat arbitrary. If a collector of, say, US Bust Dollars formed the finest collection of pieces dated 1794-1803, but then passed on getting an 1804 when he has a chance because it isn't "really an official issue" then their collection would probably not go down as one of the greatest. The same can be said for this issue – it will never be a piece that can be owned by every collector, but its presence in an otherwise great collection will raise the level of that collection into the legendary status. Of the five known specimens two are permanently impounded in museums. one is quite defaced and damaged, leaving just two attractive specimens available for the entire collecting community – and one of those two has been off the market for over 15 years (while this specimen made its first public auction appearance in almost 85 years!). While it is comparing apples and oranges, a US coin with only five known examples and that ratio of available specimens – something akin to the far more modern 1913 Liberty nickel, for instance – would be a high 7-figure item. Since 7-figures would be enough to put together the finest collection of Condors ever formed, I know what I would spend the money on if I had it!

A unique pair of white metal uniface die trials for David Rebello's private token were a bargain at £1200 – only £600 apiece for unique pieces! After the hammer fell, this writer wondered why his hand wasn't in the air, but the winning bidder was probably smiling! Skidmore's Newmarket Halfpenny, Cambridgeshire 35, went near high estimate at £1950, a

lovely example of an exceedingly rare token and in a nice, dramatic die state to boot. One of the surprises of the sale was Lot 580, an inexplicable Skidmore mule, Middlesex 1004. Its estimate of £300-400 was left in the dust as the hammer came down at £3600, with three bidders in it to the bitter end – this writer wanted it bad, but only came out as under-under-bidder. While the existence of a second specimen was reported soon after the sale, two examples known is still pretty darned rare, and this one has the benefit of being the D&H plate coin, as well as carrying the Cokayne pedigree. A mystery for the new owner to unravel will be exactly what that reverse die actually was – it was used nowhere else in any series, with a bizarre date, a fascinating legend and die work that looks like something a grade-school child might do while away at summer camp! Hopefully an article will be written on it – this one token certainly provided more hours of talk over beer before and after the auction than anything else in both sales!

With only a dozen or so hours to recuperate from Baldwin's Token Exhaustion, most of the same cast of characters met up again for the DNW sale the following day. A much broader sale, this one contained excellent offerings of 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century tokens along with the 18<sup>th</sup> century pieces. The main 18<sup>th</sup> century collection was the Welsh section of the late David Griffiths' collection, along with some more average material from other collections later in the sale. Thankfully for this writer the sale started with a large run of 17<sup>th</sup> century tokens – a fascinating area, but one I have fought collecting since the idea of having another 25,000 or so pieces on my want list just makes my head spin! The couple hours that those lots were being sold gave time for a caffeinated run to Starbucks for some last-minute work on bids and budget.

The DNW sale was different from the Baldwins's one, with just one major area, it would appeal to fewer collectors overall – if you didn't like Druids, you probably weren't doing much in the 18<sup>th</sup> century token part of the sale! While the Griffiths portion contained close to the same actual number of tokens as the Baldwin's sale, there were many, many group lots ranging from 3 to over 20 pieces, and the entire Griffiths portion was just a tad over 160 lots. This, of course, is the only way to sell this kind of material at public auction – a lot of the tokens may have had an individual value of just £10-20, and it would not be cost-effective to offer them as single lots. This did make bidding difficult for some collectors and dealers – if only one or two tokens was needed in a group of 20, then how strong do you bid, and what do you do with the varieties that you didn't want or need? An examination of the groups revealed that there was usually one or two special pieces in a group lot – a brass Druid in one, some rare varieties in others, unlisted edges, an error, a D&H Plate piece or one with an exceptional pedigree in still others. Those pieces could have been sold in single lots, and though none would have been exceptionally expensive, they would have had bidder interest. But putting one in a group did encourage people to bid stronger – the “rising tide lifts all boats” usually means that the other tokens in the group did better overall.

Very ably catalogued by Peter Preston-Morley, who also wore the auctioneer's hat (for both this sale and the Token Congress auction too), the lots were described in less detail than the Baldwin's sale, but did give the pertinent data, attribution, grade (or grade range for large

groups) and pedigree where known. Not every lot was illustrated in the sale catalogue, but all lots were illustrated online – the larger group lots usually with a single photo showing all the pieces in the lot – sufficient for bidders to get an idea of the overall quality of a group

One quibble with the DNW group lots is that while the tokens in these groups ARE usually attributed, they are not housed in a way that keeps each envelope with the token it belongs to – which means that anyone who wins a group will have to reattribute everything in it (made easier by at least knowing what the varieties in the lot are, of course). Good practice for attribution skills, but definitely time consuming for series like the Druids where counting acorns and the like puts a bit of a strain on the old eyeballs. Another problem with the larger group lots is their method of storage – most of the penny tokens, for instance, were loose in padded envelopes. People viewing those lots would dump them onto a tray, then dump them back into the envelope when finished. One can imagine that several rounds of dumping these very large, very heavy tokens probably resulted in a few more nicks and such. To be fair, few of the tokens in these groups were mint state (and the few that did have mint red were usually more protected in a plastic flip inside the envelope), so any damage done was not major.

The group lots generally sold above estimate, some soaring to 3 times or more, with others right in the range given by the auction house. For someone who needed most or all the varieties in a given group, this would certainly be a good way to acquire them! As one dealer said after the sale, one could buy in 20 minutes what took Griffiths 20 years to collect, with some of the varieties exceedingly rare – but not with enough collector demand for dealers to try and list them individually. Some areas, like the North and South Wales pieces remain ridiculously cheap – choice condition tokens, selling in group lots for £10-20 apiece, is about what these sold for 20 years ago! While prices are generally more expensive across the board in the “Conder” series, there are still areas like this where the collector on a budget can pursue pieces in high grade, peppered with a few very rare varieties that might still be cherrypicked by someone with sharp eyes!

Despite being a very limited slice of the overall “Conder” series, the Welsh tokens did surprisingly well. This was clearly one of Griffith’s favorite series and he formed the best collection of these to ever come to auction, often with duplicates of rarities. There were certainly more silver Anglesey pieces than have ever been offered in a single sale, as well as gilt proofs, die trials, white metal strikes and the like. Nearly all of those did extremely well, usually selling above the high-end estimate, and sometimes selling for 3-4-5 times the high estimate. Again, when something appears once in a lifetime, a valuation is simply what two bidders are willing to pay for it! Many of these special pieces will disappear into major collections and may not be offered for decades more to come, and bidders knew that. The very best pieces did well – though “best” is a subjective term and different collectors will consider different things to be better. The first lot was a uniface die trial by Milton in white metal, probably unique, with a pedigree over a century long and held in just three collections for that entire time, including those of Hamer and Cokayne. At £1950 it sold at more than triple estimate, but the buyer was rightly overjoyed to

get it at that price. Another die trial offered later in the sale, this one an unfinished one by Hancock, lot 253, also soared above estimate, bringing £1400 – this one interestingly in the collection of the other half of the famous writing team, Richard Dalton!

The silver strikes, all very rare, generally went in or near their estimate ranges, more of a *fait accompli* to most bidders in the room since a strong buyer for them was present and his hand seldom went down without getting what he wanted. The extremely rare Lutwyche mule pennies all sold above estimate, as did the better-made Skidmore mules which were produced for collectors and survive in better condition. These are almost never seen, and even at higher than estimate were probably something of bargains for their new owners. The highlight of this area was the Taylor mule, D&H Anglesey 265, which has a Druid's head on one side and a helmeted Athena on the other – a really stunning piece of art that also graced the Hamer and Cokayne cabinets, and which brought a bit above estimate at £2,300. With perhaps three known, collectors of this generation have been spoiled by having TWO appear in just two years – the Robbie Brown specimen last year, and now this one. Needless to say, it should be many, many more years before another is offered.

A much shorter sale than the day before, the crowd dispersed, to sleep, perchance to dream. Just not about tokens, auction bills or exchange rates. The next day was a free one in London or elsewhere for people, as the following day most would be making their way to Northampton (a fast hour train ride from London) for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Token Congress.

For those who read this Journal and have heard about the Congress but have never attended, it's hard to explain – and I wish someone had described it to me a decade ago because I would have certainly been going much sooner than I did! I earlier called it Total Immersion Token Weekend, and that is mostly true – as long as you add in eating, drinking, socializing and precious little time to sleep into the equation!

The Congress started Friday afternoon with check-in to the hotel (the price of the Congress includes your hotel room, all meals and three days of events), and socializing in the lobby. The group of attendees is warm and friendly, people will go out of their way to greet new faces, and there is a real joy to be had in a roomful of people who share the same collecting madness that you do. This is just my third year of attendance, and each year I have left with new friends and new appreciation for a fascinating slice of the hobby. The first night has a group dinner, this year done in a buffet style given the size of the group,. Ample, tasty food, with large tables that encourage conversation and laughter. A short while after dinner the club auction started – anyone attending the Congress can bid, and all lots were put up by members, with the club getting a portion of the proceeds, which helps finance the following year's show. This year nearly 170 lots were offered, ranging from lead 16<sup>th</sup> century tokens to modern issues, with something in nearly every category of collecting, including some large lots of literature that this writer would have loved to buy, but would dread trying to ship back home! Peter Preston-Morley again did service as the auctioneer, though the price ranges for these pieces were far

more budget friendly than the auction he called a few days ago – prices ranged from just £1 to a single lot at £150, with the vast majority in the £5-20 range, definitely a sale for collectors.

The meat of the Congress are the talks on tokens – which range from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (rarely earlier) pieces which have a devoted following to more modern issues of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The vast majority of talks are late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century in nature. The talks take up all of Saturday morning and afternoon, as well as Sunday morning. This year had 17 different talks, ranging from short 5-minute updates on research projects to half hour, 45-minute and hour long talks that went into great detail on their topics. ALL of the talks were interesting and worth attending – even the ones that covered areas that were not in the areas you actually collected, since those were the talks where you learned something new and exciting. It was impossible not to share the contagious enthusiasm of a speaker talking about something he or she gave a great deal of time and energy into pursuing and researching. The Saturday talks started after breakfast, with breaks for lunch and, this being England, two breaks for tea and snacks.

Saturday's program included something new, after the final talk but before dinner. This was a competitive quiz, with people splitting into groups however they wanted, and doing their best to answer an EXTREMELY broad range of questions, some easy, some difficult, with points awarded for partial answers and more for full, complete answers. The topics ranged from 17<sup>th</sup> century to modern times, so regardless of what anyone's specialty was, no one would know all the answers, and you had to work together as a group, agreeing on a single answer to give. There were some formidable groups, one with members of the London Numismatic Society and another which had four major dealers with a wide area of knowledge and experience between them. In the end, just a point or two separated the first and second place teams – this writer was fortunate enough to have been on the winning team. A £200 prize was split between the members, with a chunk of that donated to a stroke research foundation since one of the members of this team had recently had a small stroke himself. The room agreed that this was a really enjoyable event and will hopefully be done at future Congresses – it was amazing to see which people had which nuggets of information, and how they were able to retrieve them (our group, for instance, spent about half an hour coming back to a single question that was on the tips of most of our tongues. We could picture the token that was asked about in our minds, even knew the D&H number for it, but needed the town and the issuer's names.....eventually one popped out of one brain and the name came out of another in short order, but it was an effort at retrieving them in the mass of other data we all store).

After the quiz, attendees had a break before dinner – and we welcomed it by raising a pint of a local brew, generously provided by Baldwin's (and upon learning that the hotel had a corkage charge for each pint served, Baldwin's also agreed to cover that expense as well – free beer will always make friends!). The dinner this night was served individually, and each table had a couple bottles of wine as well, these donated by DNW and much appreciated too. England is definitely a country that loves their beer and smaller village pubs often have local brews that are available nowhere else. Since my hometown of San Diego is poised to overtake Seattle as



the craft-beer capital of the country (sorry about that, Bill McKivor), I could definitely appreciate the variety offered – and I am especially fond of the hard ciders that often offer even more of a kick, despite sounding so tame.

Directly following the beer-dinner-wine-wine-wine offering, the Bourse opened, with a dozen or so dealers set up. Did the imbibing before, during and after dinner lead to more purchases? Probably not, as only tokens and medals were offered for sale (finally, a bourse without a single slab!), and collectors were lined up waiting to get to tables and secure pieces for their collections. The bourse stayed open until midnight, and there were still plenty of people in the room at that point, somewhat bleary eyed and tired (nothing seems to exhaust more than a day of sitting on one's behind!), but all with smiles on their faces as they went to their rooms.

After not nearly enough sleep, we met again the next day for breakfast and the remaining talks, with a short tea break. One of the speakers, who shall remain nameless, had put off working on his talk for months on end, finally putting it together (or so he claims) in the wee hours of the morning before it was given, aided by several pints. The talk was brilliant and fascinating, of course, and this writer has always been a fan of winging it. Every talk was interesting in its own way, and it was impossible to leave without learning something new.

Hotel rooms were cleared out, and people reluctantly made their way back to cars and trains, knowing that the Total Immersion Weekend was about to end – but already looking forward to doing it all over again in 2015. That year's Congress will be held in Newbury, a short train ride from London and Heathrow – and this year the city might have something to tempt attendees to actually get out of the hotel for a bit, for just a mile or two up the hill lies Highclere Castle – better known today as the setting for the Downton Abbey television series. While the castle itself is closed to visitors after mid-September (coincidentally, it was the first stop this year for this writer), it will be worth checking to see if the gardens are open – after all, the building itself is the iconic part of the television series, with most of the interior scenes actually shot elsewhere.

If you have never been to a Token Congress, why not make 2015 your year to start? Once again there will be two major auctions in the days before (part II of the Badlwin's basement and a DNW sale with content still to be announced), and the CoinEx show the weekend before. A fast week or 10-day trip could more than pay for itself with additions to your collections – and a few days more would give you a memorable vacation in London and other parts of England. There are hotels for every pocketbook, and airfares can be booked well in advance when they go on sale (and sometimes package deals with air and hotel really bring the cost down dramatically). While I cannot guarantee that you will find the token you always dreamed of owning, I think it safe to say that you will have an amazing experience, meet many people who share your hobby, make new friends and get a bit of a vacation experience that will have memories for a lifetime.





# The End of Spence (*for now!*)

*By Jeff Rock*

In the Spring, 2008 issue (consecutive number 47) of *The “Conder” Token Collector’s Journal*, Alan Judd penned a most welcome and long overdue look at some of the forgotten outputs of perhaps the most colorful character involved with 18<sup>th</sup> century provincial tokens – Thomas Spence. Whole books can be (and have been) written about Spence the man, and his views; and good articles have been written on a chunk of his numismatic output, in the series we Americans call “Conder tokens.”

It had long been known that Spence also counterstamped<sup>1</sup> coins (both regal and counterfeit), tokens and blank copper discs with short, pithy sayings concerning his political and social views which he laid out in both his writings (which landed him in jail) and on his struck tokens (which didn’t help his finances). While these pieces were known, they never received the scholarly look his token output did. Batty mentioned them and actually provided a good initial listing of roughly 250 different counterstamps, though these were scattered across 800 different entries in his work, which makes finding them somewhat difficult. Batty’s approach was to list things alphabetically, under headings straight out of the Victorian approach to cataloging everything! While some headings like Newton, Pitt or Napoleon were easy to navigate, others such as “N” (for a single letter punched into a copper coin) or various initials found on engraved coins were not as useful to later collectors. While Batty lists 80+ counterstamps under Spence (all of which have “Spence’s Plan” in the phrase stamped onto the coin), it is not clear whether he knew that many of the other counterstamps he listed were also Spence products, as they are all listed in his section of “Provincial Coins, Halfpenny Size, Issuer or Society Not Known.” Most, if not all, of Batty’s listing of Spence tokens were probably in his own collection – he noted he owned about 15,000 pieces on the title page of his work, and he used the published volumes as a vehicle to sell duplicate examples from his collection.

It is quite probable that many (if not all) of the Batty pieces ended up in the collection of Arthur W. Waters. In his 1906 work *Notes Gleaned from Contemporary Literature, &c: Respecting the Issuers of the Eighteenth Century Tokens: Struck for the County of Middlesex : Arranged According to Atkins's Tradesmen's Tokens* he noted that he “once had in his collection about 300 of these pieces,” the use of the past tense implying that they had been sold by the time his book was published, and possibly quite a bit prior to that since he chose “once had” instead of “recently owned” or some similar phrasing. Waters listed 88 different counterstamps (one actually on a Spence token), ranging from single words such as PEACE, LIBERTY, WAR or STARVATION to an eight-word phrase READ SPENCE’S PLAN PEACE AND LIBERTY FOR EVER. Given the number of counterstamped pieces in his collection there were clearly

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<sup>1</sup> While many collectors use “counterstamp” and “countermark” pretty much interchangeably, the term countermark generally implies some sort of official reason for marking a coin such as a revaluation or applying an official mark to a foreign coin to circulate at a prescribed value. Counterstamps do not have that sort of official backing and were applied by merchants and others for advertising, or as test pieces for punches used on objects such as gold, silver or pewter goods, guns or anything else that would be marked by its maker. In this article, I have chosen to use “counterstamp” when discussing the Spence pieces, except where the word “countermark” was used elsewhere as part of a quotation.

duplicates of some of these phrases, with just the host coins being different and thus kept in the collection.

Unfortunately it isn't known where Waters' collection went when it was sold – though it is probable it ended up in the greatest collection of British tokens ever formed, that of Captain Francis S. Cokayne. It's known that he owned at least some Spence counterstamps, as this author has one in his collection complete with the roundel that accompanies many other evasion coppers from the Cokayne collection (though these roundels are quite different from those found with his Conder tokens – these do not give a pedigree or date of purchase, but nearly always have on the back of the roundel a series of numbers and letters written in green, red and purple ink – this order always followed on the fairly large number of examples examined. These may be some sort of bookkeeping numbers, in different journals, established by Captain Cokayne. The second, red inked line almost always starts with a letter – I have seen A, B, C, D and E used as initial letters, all for evasion coppers (and others probably exist), so it's clear that the letter isn't an abbreviation for a book (such as A for Atkins) or what the coin might be (such as C for Counterstamp). While we may be able to get a good sample of these annotated roundels, we may never break the cypher – unless some of Cokayne's actual notebooks are found, and we can correlate numbers with entries. Perhaps evasions were just recorded in the order they were purchased and entered into Journal A until that was filled, then on to Journal B, and so on.

Or perhaps Cokayne was working on a new attribution system for the series, one or more of the lines correlating to die studies he was doing as a way to make sense of his very large collection of these enigmatic issues. This is a real possibility, as Cokayne was an astute collector who thoroughly examined and researched everything he owned. We know that he purchased extensively from the Atkins collection in the early 1900's, and doubtless many other evasion coppers would have come his way over the years. In the only public auction specifically of a part of his collection, shortly after his death, the preface of the Glendining's July 17, 1946 auction states that "his collection was largely used for illustrations in the books by Dalton and Hamer, and he collaborated in the publication of that work." When viewing the portions of his "Conder" tokens that have come to the market in the last few decades, it seems that many of the varieties that were not listed in Atkins were discovered by Cokayne and added in to the listings of Dalton & Hamer – this is especially so with the larger series that have many minute die varieties such as the Wilkinson, Anglesey Druid, Camac and other issues. Given Cokayne's penchant for studying the minutiae of pieces, the evasion copper series may well have interested him enough to start preliminary work on something to supplement or replace the Atkins text, which is just a scant eleven pages (pages 385-395) with no illustrations. If Cokayne was working on an attribution guide of some sort it probably not survived – but a good chunk of his evasion collection remains intact, and many of them have roundels with notes he made of new varieties; when a new book is finally written on the series, Cokayne should be given credit for the amazing number of new varieties he discovered.



*Figure One: Evasion Copper with Spence's "LIBERTY" counterstamp applied to the obverse. Ex Cokayne collection, with distinct roundel. The evasion is Atkins 355 (type), Cobwright G.1110/B.0070.*

While some may rightly state that the roundel is sufficiently different from Cokayne's writing that it is probably not his, the roundel illustrated with the evasion copper below IS in Cokayne's hand, complete with his pedigree information – and though not in green/red/purple ink, those colors are actually written out on the back of the roundel. That suggests that Cokayne (or someone else) redid the roundels for his evasion collection at some later date. As the one below was purchased in 1923, from the Yeats collection, it could mean that the roundels with the colored inks were done prior to this date – but since the "red" line starts with an "A," if these were done in any sort of order then it may suggest that this was a fairly early evasion purchase and that the roundel was not replaced with a newer version. At least one other roundel like this one, in Cokayne's hand, has the "red" line noted, but without an initial letter, just adding to the mystery. To this author's eyes the ink on the full color coded roundels looks newer, though both roundels clearly have some age to them.



*Figure Two: Evasion Copper with a more typical Cokayne roundel, complete with pedigree and purchase date and “color coded” reverse, though here in black ink, with the colors noted in parenthesis. The evasion copper is Atkins Unlisted, Cobwright B.0020/B.0450. One can grasp how serious of a collector Cokayne was by his note that this is unlisted and a new (reverse) die not noted by Atkins. Since he clearly studied these pieces – at a time when no one else really did! – he may have been using these codes to both keep track of his purchases as well as to devise a new attribution system.*

In any event, it is known that Cokayne had a penchant for buying EVERYTHING that was unusual and interesting, and his collection was both as broad and deep as possible (he was truly a man who probably went out of his way NOT to return a coin that was offered to him!). It would certainly make sense for the group of Spence counterstamps to eventually make it into his vast collection – either directly from Waters (since Cokayne was purchasing a few decades before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and would have known Waters through his writings) or at some later point (he was buying until his death in the World War Two years – an amazing stretch of time for a collector who had both exquisite tastes and the necessary funds to satisfy them).

From the time of Waters’ book, nothing much seems to have been written about the Spence counterstamps until 1969 when R. H. Thompson published “The Dies of Thomas Spence (1750-1814)” in *the British Numismatic Journal* (Volume 38, pages 126-162). While this article looked at the entire numismatic output of Spence, the author devoted several pages to the



counterstamps, viewing them in the context of Spence's political tokens. Thompson cites the collections of R.N.P. Hawkins and C. Brunel as useful in his listing of 27 different individual punches that he gave in his article; the size and later ownership of those collections is unknown to this author. Oddly, in the list of punches, two were marked with asterisks as not seen by him – one, "LIBERTY," actually being the most common one this author has found on evasion coppers, with six different examples in my collection, as well as one with this stamp on a counterfeit Irish halfpenny of 1773 (a non-regal date that earlier collectors may have well considered to be an evasion copper, though it is more properly part of the larger non-regal series). Also of interest, Thompson noted that the collection of the British Museum then contained only six examples of Spence counterstamps – suggesting that early collectors who donated their collections to the museum were not searching for Spence counterstamps with the same enthusiasm they used chasing his tokens, mules, off-metals and other special pieces!<sup>2</sup>

In his work, Waters erred in dating the Spence counterstamps, stating that "they must have been mainly countermarked before the year 1787, for there were but one or two specimens upon any coins of a later date." Since the majority of Spence's counterstamps appear to be on well-used regal coinage, counterfeit British and Irish halfpence, evasion coppers and blank planchets, the dates on the host coins actually mean almost nothing. Many of the counterfeits and evasions were backdated, often by decades (a few by a century or more!), and regal coins of dates from a century earlier could still be found in circulation. The only useful thing the host coins tell us are the latest possible date that the counterstamp could be applied, which is the latest accurate date on a host coin. Something like the Spence counterstamps which exist in a fairly large quantity do give us an idea of what was still in circulation at a given time, since it is probable that he stamped every copper coin that came his way for a short period of time.

Thompson makes a much tighter argument when he suggests that Spence turned to counterstamping coins AFTER he sold his token dies to Skidmore (perhaps using the money from the sales of those dies to purchase the word punches he needed). Spence was idealistic enough to think that his tokens would be revolutionary and rile up the masses to better their situation. Instead they were purchased by the very people he wanted to rebel against – the titled and rich collectors who "chased after halfpence." It must have been galling for him to know that the only way his tokens would be a financial success was if he catered to these people – and that his tokens, sitting in a collector's cabinet, meant his messages would never reach the people for whom they were intended. No wonder he sold his dies to Skidmore!

Spence's idea to counterstamp circulating copper coinage was a stroke of genius – collectors would not want lower grade "damaged" coins in their collections (as can be seen with the very small number in the British Museum), and lowly coppers would have been the ONLY coin that the poor would likely ever see. Thompson notes that Spence counterstamps are found on British, Scottish and Irish coins from the reign of Charles II to George III. Those earliest dated host coins would have been very low grade pieces that somehow remained in circulation for a century or more – and they are certainly much rarer host coins than those from the reign of George III which make up the majority of the known regal (and counterfeit) halfpence used (there are also a couple of extremely rare farthing hosts). Thompson dates Spence's striking of

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<sup>2</sup> Spence apparently did not own a press himself, and his tokens were probably struck by Skidmore. The large variety of mules and off-metal strikes of Spence tokens were almost certainly struck by Skidmore, after Spence had sold him his dies.

these as circa 1797, which is a good enough guess since the latest date known for a host coin is actually a Soho Mint Cartwheel penny with that date – though it is probably likely that Spence started counterstamping in 1796, prior to it being announced that the Soho Mint would soon be striking full weight copper coinage. Once the Soho pieces were released in sufficient quantity, the lightweight, heavily worn regal coppers and all the counterfeits would have been driven from circulation (with the poor who had no other recourse being the ones who would be stuck with them when merchants and others had the ability to refuse them and only take the Soho coppers in trade). Since Spence wanted his message to reach the people he would not have started this venture knowing that the coins he was using would soon be obsolete. Given the paucity of 1797-dated specimens (just two confirmed though others are probable), these probably represent the last pieces he counterstamped before calling it quits.

Alan Judd's 2008 article illustrated the punches used by Spence, and had good photographs of a representative sample of the types of host coins used. The cover coin was struck on a Soho Cartwheel penny dated 1797; other host coins were a Middlesex 676 – the first Spence token issued; blank copper planchets; genuine British halfpence of William III, George II and George III as well as a George II farthing; genuine Irish halfpence of Charles II, George II and a William Woods' Hibernia halfpenny of 1723; counterfeit British and Irish halfpence of George II and George III; a counterfeit British farthing of George III and an evasion copper. This group includes many types listed in Batty (not surprising if it was part of his original collection), and is presumably a representative sample of what was in circulation in London in 1796/7 when Spence started applying the counterstamps. While the blank planchets may have been specially procured by Spence, a contemporary hoard of counterfeits partially acquired by this author also included a few blank copper planchets – not as smooth and well-made as those used for the Spence counterstamps, but suggesting that blanks were somewhat acceptable in commerce, perhaps seen as “better than nothing” when circulating copper was in short supply. Thompson quotes a contemporary note (written on the back of an envelope from Spence) where it was noted that Spence had “blanks rudely cut out, not quite so large nor so thick as a halfpenny, on which he struck words with punches.” That could suggest that Spence's first counterstamps were on the blank planchets, and that he turned to circulating copper coins when those ran out. This reading would make sense if the price of coppers fell in late 1796/early 1797 on the promise of the full-weight Soho coinage being soon released. Since this marks the final months of the large scale manufacture of counterfeits and evasion coppers in Birmingham (and elsewhere), it is quite likely that those striking such things would have given an even larger discount on whatever inventory they had, just to move them out before the Soho coinages rendered them worthless. As noted, there are only a few pieces known actually struck on Soho pieces, and those are only known on the 1797-dated pennies. While some 8.6 million of the pennies were struck, this was over a period of several years, with no change in the date for this denomination – presumably in early 1797 at least, the coins would have still been curiosities that were hoarded, with few making it into circulation. As the mintage grew larger and more coins were released into commerce they would have circulated more and eventually accomplish Matthew Boulton's goal of driving out counterfeits and well-worn regal issues that were past their prime.

It is interesting that no further Spence word punches have been found since Thompson wrote his article, and the same 27 punches are listed by Judd, with 25 of them illustrated with good quality close-up images. Judd was unable to find two punches, “THE” and “EVERY.” It is certainly odd that “the” – one of the most common words in the English language! – would be



so difficult to find, but Spence had limited space in which to apply his counterstamps, and he cut unneeded words out wherever possible, so long as the meaning was still clear, and “THE” was an easy word to lose. Four years later, Michael Knight was able to add an image of “THE” to the corpus, which was illustrated in the Winter, 2012 issue (consecutive number 63) of *The “Conder” Token Collector’s Journal* (and, even better, the host coin for it was another example of the first Spence token, Middlesex 676).

That leaves just one more punch not seen by Judd, the word “EVERY.” A fairly recent addition to this author’s collection fills in that final word, the elusive stamp found on a blank copper planchet, counterstamped on one side “SPENCE’S PLAN / SMALL FARMS” and on the other side “AND / EVERY / BLESSING.” Photographs of the enlarged punch as well as the full counterstamp are illustrated below.



*Figure Three: Enlarged image of the “EVERY” punch used by Spence.*



*Figure Four: The full copper blank planchet with Spence’s counterstamps on either side, reading SPENCE’S PLAN / SMALL FARMS on one side, AND / EVERY / BLESSING on the other.*

In his article, Alan Judd also noted at the end that “Format of Birmingham listed a Spence countermark on a silver blank a couple of years ago.” While I have no way of knowing if this is the same specimen, I recently added one on a silver blank to my own collection. Needless to say, a very rare metal, and though one additional example on a blank silver planchet has been reliably reported it has not yet been seen. The one in this author’s collection is illustrated below.



*Figure Five: Spence’s counterstamp on a blank silver planchet. Note the additional “N” stamp on the otherwise blank side, as well as the traces of other letters above LANDLORDS and below SPENCE’S PLAN. The silver planchet measures just 24 x 25.5mm.*

Spence the man would probably be disappointed that while collectors today continue to chase his halfpence, his vaunted Plan did not live on except as a historical footnote. Given his somewhat contrarian nature, I suspect he would be upset at the high prices both his tokens and his counterstamps bring today – but since neither would actually circulate in our modern era, he would probably begrudgingly acknowledge that it is due only to those very collectors he despised that his tokens and counterstamps survived to the present day, making his numismatic immortality, at least, assured.

We may think that this is the final article needed on Spence’s counterstamps, but given the quixotic nature of the man and the many mysteries found in his token issues, I don’t think anyone would be surprised if there are still more things out there to be found. Hopefully whoever finds the next piece of the puzzle will share it with readers of this Journal.

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# William Binns – Did he get what he deserved?

Issuer of Dublin 347-350

*By Jon Lusk*

In my book, *British and Irish Tradesmen and Their Tokens of 1787-1804*, my final words on Mr. Binns were:

William brought a suit against John Scott, timber merchant, for having criminal conversation with his wife and his claim for damages was £5,000! (Over £300,000 in today's money.) It turns out that “having criminal conversation” was legal language in 1815 for having a sexual relationship.

At the time the book went to the printers I didn't know the outcome of the court case or even if the charge had gone to trial. I even wondered if the basis for the charge had been a conspiracy by William and his wife, Jane Caroline (Keene) to alleviate his impending liquidation due to bankruptcy. Since that time, six months ago, I have discovered a transcript of the trial<sup>1</sup> in the Harvard Law Library, and learned a great deal about William Binns, not to mention the outcome of the trial.

First, let me cover some of the history of Criminal Conversation. It is based on the exclusive “property” rights of the husband having been violated, and he then sues his wife's supposed lover for that loss. The basis for the law was abolished in England in 1857 and Ireland in 1976. However it still exists, on paper at least, in a few states in the United States. One of the twists in this law in the early 1800's is that it could not be brought by the wife against the lover of the husband because, at the time, any suit by a married woman automatically included her husband as a plaintiff and a person cannot be both a contributor to an action and plaintiff in the same suit.

There have been a number of sensational cases of criminal conversation during the second half of the 18th century. In one of these, *Grosvenor v. Cumberland* in 1769, Lord Grosvenor sued the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland for criminal conversation with his wife, and was awarded damages of £10,000. In another much publicized case, *Worsley v. Bisset* in 1782, Sir Richard Worsley lost his case against George Bisset, after it came out at the trial that Sir Richard had participated in his own dishonor, by showing his friend his wife, Seymour Dorothy Fleming, naked in a bath house. In a third case in 1796, the Earl of Westmeath was awarded £10,000 in the suit against his wife's lover, Augustus Bradshaw. A depiction of criminal conversation also occurred on the television series, *Garrow's Law*, set in the early 1800's England, where the case developed over a number of episodes.

Returning to William Binns – in the late 1790s and early 1800s it appears that he was a successful entrepreneurial ironmonger. (An exhaustive listing of his goods for sale in 1810 is shown on the third page of this article.) He had refurbished a building located at 25 N. St. Stephen's Green in 1796-97 and dubbed it the Pantheon Phusitechnikon, and in 1802 he was admitted as a Freeman of the City of Dublin – he had *arrived*. In 1799 and again in 1802 he issued tokens proudly showing the front of his building, the back of which is shown in the picture at right. In each of the years there were two varieties.





## The Tokens of William Binns



Two reverse dies used



Dublin 347



Dublin 348



Two reverse dies used



Dublin 349



Dublin 350

At the time of publication of my book I did not know either the date of his birth or death, but at the trial it was revealed that in 1816 he was 45 and his wife Jane was 42. During their twenty three years of marriage they had had ten children and six were still living at the time of trial, four boys and two girls. It was also disclosed, in the background given by Binns' attorney, Mr. Burrowes, that the couple had met when William had become "*domesticated in the family of the late Mr. William Keene*". Meaning, I assume, that he either worked in some capacity for, or boarded with, his future wife's family. They were married in 1793 and Binns received what was then a small fortune in dowry, £1,300.

By early 1815, his business had fallen on hard times. According to testimony, he was traveling the countryside during this time, trying to wholesale excess stock in order to save his business. It was during this time that a life-long friend, John Scott, a timber merchant, had come for dinner...and stayed the night.

Criminal Conversation was a strange charge in 1815. The three principles in the case do not testify. All evidence is given by others, and this would usually be household staff that *saw something*. The complaining side went first, leading off by a through description of wedded bliss that had existed in the Binns' household.

How much help Mrs. Binns had been in the business and generally what a great mother she had been to their children. There were two female employees of Binns and they lived in his house and helped both with the children and with the store. They were to testify that Scott "...was seen fondling with her by those ladies and by the clerks, and they had reason to believe that the citadel was surrendered; they were therefore on their guard." On the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, 1815, Mrs. Binns had gone out and returned with Mr. Scott. One of the two female employees was so disgusted at the looseness of their conversation that she had withdrawn. The other, Miss Wilkinson, excused herself later but had remained vigilant throughout the night describing the squeaking floors and candle light movements that could only have been Mr. Scott visiting the bedroom of Mrs. Binns.

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# G O O D S

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## WILLIAM BINNS,

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<b>A</b> TLASSES (various) Back Bands Bellows Books for Children Brass Work Brushes Candlesticks Cart and Plough Traces Chimney Pots China Ware Colours (in Cakes) Combs Cutlery Delph Wares Desks (travelling) Digesters Egg Frames Engines for Gardens Fenders Fire Irons Frying Pans Garden Tools Gilt Fancy Goods	Grid Irons, fluted and plain Guardavines Hinges Hot Hearths Ink Stands Jacks (portable) Japanned Wares Kettles Kitchen Furniture Knives and Forks Lamps Liquor Frames Locks of all sorts Maps (various) Mathematical Instruments Microscopes Miniature Frames Nails of all kinds Needles Ovens Ouncils Paper Parasols	Pen Knives Pocket Books Pots of all sorts Quadrants Rakes Rods (for Stairs) Saucepans Salts Scissors Skeates Snuffers and Stands Spoons of all sorts Stoves Tea Pots Telescopes Toast Racks Tool Chests Umbrellas (very cheap) Urns for Tea and Coffee Weights Wheat Mills White Metal Goods Work Boxes
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AND A VARIETY OF OTHER ARTICLES.

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As some may be inclined to suppose, from the low Terms at which the above Stock will be offered for Sale, that they are inferior in Quality to others exhibited in this City,—the Proprietor pledges himself, that his Stock is laid in from the most respectable Manufactories in England and Ireland.

DUBLIN, January 1, 1810.

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An 1810 listing of items for sale at Binns establishment  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

The attorneys for the plaintiff then spent some time describing the descent in the character of Mrs. Binns, that she had been thrown out of the local church due to drinking, and she had gained an excessive amount of weight since her marriage. (Ten children may have had something to do with that, I should think.) This tact is a slippery slope for the plaintiff because he has some need to paint his wife as capable of being a participant but that his “loss of affection” of this woman is not too diminished and therefore less valuable in setting the value of his loss. A few other witnesses were called to show what a diligent hardworking man Mr. Binns was and how he was just trying to save his business that had fallen on hard times due to the downturn in the economy.

The two hired women, Miss Carmichael and Miss Wilkinson, felt they had to share the events of the evening with Mr. Binns when returned home a few weeks later, and at that point William accused his wife of infidelity (she did not protest) and dismissed her from the home. She went to live with an uncle and was staying there throughout the trial. At this point in my reading I still harbored the feeling that this whole affair may have been a collusion between the two Binns to obtain money to avoid bankruptcy. Such thoughts were supported by the claim that the Binns had borrowed money from Scott and had sent Mrs. Binns to do the requesting. It was now the defendant’s attorneys’ turn at presentation.

It is interesting that the defense did not attempt to claim that Scott was innocent, rather that the credibility of the primary witness, Miss Wilkinson, should be questioned. It turns out that Miss Wilkinson and Binns were on quite friendly terms. Walked arm in arm on many occasions and in fact the two had spent the night at a cottage that Binns owned a few miles from his house. They even had a witness claim the he had observed Binns with his arms around Miss Wilkinson. There were additional witnesses examined and cross-examined – all seemed to point to a very close relationship between Binns and Miss Wilkinson. Eventually, the jury got to have its say.

And they found John Scott guilty of Criminal Conversation! However, the awarded amount of 6 pence probably did little to alleviate the impending bankruptcy. Did William Binns get what he deserved? That’s your call to make.

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<sup>1</sup> “Crim. Con. – William Binns, Plaintiff, John Scott, Defendant, Before the Hon. Justice Mayne”, published and authored in Dublin, 1816, by William Espy, 59 Dame Street.



## A Book Review

### *British and Irish Tradesmen and their Copper Tokens of 1787 – 1804*

Jon Lusk has authored a book on "Tradesmen Tokens" of the British Isles, 1787-1804, that is destined to earn recognition as a classic study of the subject. As an appreciator of the Conder Tokens series, though certainly not an aficionado, upon opening the covers of his book I quickly found it to be an engrossing work.

The book's nearly 400 pages embrace detailed discussions of more than 1200 issues that fall within the scope of its coverage. This being but a small subset of the more than 4,000+ tokens generally recognized as Conders, the author has succeeded in presenting an organized and easy-to-use catalog, drawing upon his varied experience as an author, editor and publisher in printed and electronic media of numismatic "copper" realms.

That Lusk has succeeded in developing a most welcome and highly useable book is beyond question, each listed token being accompanied by high quality photographic representations, including the edges for lettered-edge tokens, along with detailed descriptions. He also researched and shares pertinent background information on the individuals and businesses of each issue, along with historical data on the design renderings executed on the tokens.

Importantly, for both beginners and seasoned collectors of these issues, Lusk in this subset study retained the D&H numbering system, as assigned by authors R. Dalton and S. H. Hamer in their classical recording of the broader Conder series. Each token issue is also accompanied by mintage figures when available, with helpful availability codes appended by grade in four ranges of preservation from XF to MS64 or higher.

Interestingly, the listings are also accompanied by a "Selected Collections" code, devised by the author to guide the collector in the assembly of collections of four variable degrees of completeness. For those seeking to build a collection of one each of those issues bearing statements of "promise to redeem" -- the "BB" collection -- the requirement is 110 tokens; when the "year and/or denomination changed within the group" -- the "B" collection -- the requirement builds to 138 tokens. If an issue has been deemed to be a "Genuine Trade Token" by the author, though it may not bear a "promise to redeem" -- the "AA" collection -- the requirement is 196 tokens; while the ultimate collection -- the "A" collection -- includes the qualifying additional tokens absent the "promise," again with the "year and/or denomination changed" variations bringing the count to 248.

Helpfully, Lusk has also incorporated a pair of comprehensive indexes. The first is an alphabetical index of the town names appearing on the cataloged tokens. The second is an alphabetical index of the issuers of the tokens. The entries in both indexes are accompanied by the D&H numbers and page references for locating the tokens that pertain as incorporated in the present reference.

Supportively, the author developed for the reader and collector nine appendices which expand upon the inclusion, exclusion and arrangement criteria observed for the catalog proper. Perhaps the most important is Appendix C, detailing the basis on which selected D&H listed tokens were rejected for inclusion in this compilation. Also probably most helpful is Appendix A, a 28 page presentation of roughly 400 photos to facilitate the identification of varieties of the cataloged tokens.

The other appendices include a compact guide -- Appendix B -- to the structure of the four collection approaches that Lusk developed and suggests to the reader and collector. There is also one -- Appendix I -- exploring an understanding of the D&H classification system, another -- Appendix H -- presenting an evaluation of the diverse Pidcock token issues, and still others -- appendices D and E -- analyzing the ages of issuers and a dictionary of issuer occupations.

All in all, building on 25 years of collecting the "Tradesmen Copper Token" issues and six years of researching, arranging and writing the successor to R. C. Bell's *Commercial Coins* reference published in 1963, Lusk has certainly done himself proud in laboring his way through and making sense of a forest of inconsistencies and beliefs built up over two centuries to this result. He has certainly met his objective of delivering a reference that will enable the reader and collector to "understand" these tokens and their issuers.

"The pieces themselves can be real works of art," Lusk states in the preface, in perhaps best capturing his zeal in having pursued the project. "Most of them are available in 'like new' condition and they can be bought for a fraction of the price of other coins from this period. You will find collecting these beautiful copper tokens rewarding and you can easily appreciate the history that surrounds them!"

I recommend, without reservation, *British and Irish Tradesmen and their Copper Tokens of 1787 - 1804* by Jon D. Lusk as a highly engaging reference catalog – one that possesses the rich and colorful aura of a coffee table book – as an addition to any numismatic library.

-- *Clifford Mishler*

A note about the author of this article: Clifford Mishler has spent a lifetime deeply engaged in coin collecting community activities, having been introduced to the hobby in 1950 at the age of ten, as an author editor, publisher, corporate manager and consultant. Having initially pursued filling Whitman blue folders with coins collected from circulation, commencing in 1957 his interests became more specialized and focused, at which time he became engaged in authoring and privately publishing specialized studies in the exnumia field. In 1963 he commenced a 40 year career at Krause Publications as an editor, publisher and corporate manager, culminating with retirement in 2003 following a 12 year tenure in the successive capacities of president and board chairman, subsequent to which he served Whitman Publishing in a consulting capacity as a numismatic development director (2005-11). A founding member of the Token and Medal Society, Mishler served that organization as editor of its journal (1964-68) and president (1976-78), and is a two time recipient of its Distinguished Service Award (1966 and 1980). A 50 year (in 2006) life member of the American Numismatic Association, Mishler is a recipient of that organization's Medal of Merit (1983), Farran Zerbe Memorial Distinguished Service Award (1984), Glenn Smedley Memorial Dedicated Services Award (1991), Lifetime Achievement Award (1997), Numismatist of the Year Award (2002) and Hall of Fame recognition (2004). He served on the organization's board of governors (2011-13), having served a prior term as governor (1007-09) and as president (2009-11).

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